

**Notice of Allowability**

Application No.

10/014,201

Examiner

HELEN SHIBRU

Applicant(s)

VAN DER SCHAAR, AUKE S.

Art Unit

2621

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--**

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 11/13/2001.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-21.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some\* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.  
**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

**Attachment(s)**

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Michael Belk on March 31, 2006.

Claims 1, 6 and 13 have been amended as follows.

Claim 1, A method for synchronizing the playback of pre-recorded program stored in a plurality of playback devices, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving incoming program content signals comprised of series of frames, said program content signals including a string of closed-caption (CC) characters;

sampling the string of said CC characters at a predetermined sampling interval, wherein said sampling interval represents at least one CC character each frame;

storing a sequence of sampled CC characters and the corresponding frame according to a predetermined format in a memory; and,

simultaneously displaying a desired segment said program content signals between plurality of said playback devices in response to a user's request, wherein the user request is selected from the stored sample characters.

Claim 6, A method for synchronizing the playback of program between a plurality of playback devices, the method comprising the steps of:

analyzing incoming program content signals including series of frames and closed-caption signals;

retrieving said CC signals from said program content signals;

formatting said retrieved CC signals and the corresponding segment of said program content signals according to predetermined criteria into a storage device;

transmitting a user request, by a first playback device to a second playback device based on the CC signals, to retrieve a desired segment of program content signals stored in the respective storage device for viewing; and,

synchronously displaying said desired segment of said program content signal contents by said first playback device and said second playback device.

Claim 13, A system for synchronizing the playback of a program between a plurality of playback devices, comprising:

a signal receiving unit for receiving program content signals, the program content signals including series of frames and closed-caption signals;

an analyzing unit for analyzing the program content signals to identify said CC data;

a data sorting unit for extracting and separating said CC signals from the program content signals and for sampling said CC signals and the corresponding program content signals at a predetermined sampling interval;

a clock generator for generating said predetermined sampling interval;

a memory for storing sequence of said extracted CC signals and the corresponding program content signals for a subsequent retrieval; and,

a playback unit, coupled to said memory means, for selectively controlling display of the program content signals based on a user's request; wherein the user request is selected from the stored sample characters.

### **REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE**

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The present invention is directed to a method for synchronizing the playback of a prerecorded program stored in a plurality of playback devices. Independent claims 1, 6 and 13 identifies the uniquely distinct features "sampling the string of said characters at a predetermined sampling interval, wherein said sampling interval represents at least one CC character for each frame; storing a sequence of sampled CC characters and the corresponding frame according to a predetermined format in a memory; and, simultaneously displaying a desired segment of said program content signals between the plurality of said playback devices response to a user's request, where in the user request is selected from the stored sample character." The closest prior arts, Hull (US Pat. No. 5,448,287), Barker (US Pat. No. 4,538,188), Goldmark(US Pat. No. 4,009,331), and Rodriguez (US Pat. No. 6,118,923), either singularly or in combination, fail to anticipate or render the above underlined limitations obvious.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

### ***Conclusion***

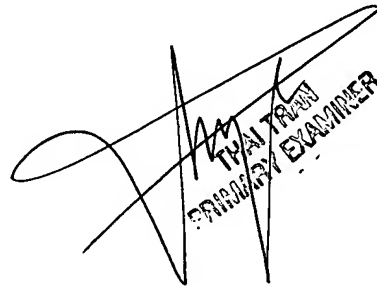
3. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to HELEN SHIBRU whose telephone number is (571) 272-7329.

The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8:30AM-5PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, THAI Q. TRAN can be reached on (571) 272-7382. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Helen Shibru  
March 31, 2006



THAI Q. TRAN  
PRIMARY EXAMINER